

"Do I Need To Be Baptized?"

Often people that come to our church have questions regarding baptism. Perhaps the reason is that they have come from another denomination, have not attended church before or have only recently begun to think about it. At first look it may even seem like a rather unusual procedure.

Some of the questions might be stated like this:

- *"Why do you ask that a person who has received Christ to be baptized?"*
- *"Why do you 'dunk' people when you baptize?"*
- *"If I join your church will I need to be baptized? "*
- *"Is baptism part of salvation? "*

Each of these questions is important. How we answer these questions should be based on the Bible's view of baptism and salvation. Let's look at some critical issues regarding baptism.

1. Baptism follows conversion.

The book of Acts is an account of the beginnings of the church following the resurrection of Christ. Each time that an individual came to believe and receive Christ as Lord and Savior they were baptized. It was a testimony that followed conversion. Nowhere in scripture is an individual commanded to be baptized who has not yet committed his life to Christ as Lord.

Baptism was not an act that took place in order to become a Christian but was a testimony that you had become a Christian by faith in Christ.

2. Baptism Is A Command

While unnecessary for salvation, baptism is a command given to all who belong to Christ. In fact, the church is commanded to go into all the world to teach and baptize in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19). This was the commission that Christ gave to His disciples following His resurrection. Equally the individual that receives Christ is commanded to follow in baptism. (Acts 2:38; 8:36-40; 10:47-48) The act of the believer in baptism is an act of obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ.

3. Baptism Is By Immersion

Many references to baptism in the New Testament do not give us the form of the baptism. The clearest passage, however, is shown in Acts 8 with the baptism of the Ethiopian by Philip. The description leaves little doubt that they went down into the water and they came up out of the water.

Immersion symbolizes the important aspects of the work of Christ in salvation. When a person is baptized they are lowered below the water just as Christ was lowered into the grave.

When one is raised back up out of the water, it symbolizes the resurrection of Christ.

Equally, the act of lowering and raising symbolizes that the believer is dead to their old life and raised to a new life in Christ.

4. Baptism Is A Testimony

While this has already been said in the three points listed before, it needs to be emphasized on its own. Baptism was the New Testament means by which an individual testified to others that they had personally received Christ as Lord.

The manner of testimony was not of their choosing but was the Lord's method. It identified the believer with Christ and with other believers. Each one that is baptized affirms their commitment before others that Christ is their Lord.

Some Scriptures To Help In Understanding Baptism

The necessity of a public profession ...

Matthew 10:32-33

The command to baptize...

Matthew 28:19

The sequence in regard to salvation...

Acts 2:3 8

The attitude of the believer ...

Acts 2:41

The form of baptism...

Acts 8:36-40

The symbolism it represents ...

Romans 6:4-5;

Colossians 2:12

Common Questions Regarding Baptism

Q: I was baptized as an infant. Does your church accept this baptism for membership?

A: While some denominations baptize infants we believe that the Bible teaches that baptism follows conversion and is the testimony of an individual receiving Christ as Lord. There is no record of an infant being baptized in scripture nor is it reasonable to assume that an infant is desiring to testify in this manner. We would, therefore, ask that you publicly testify through baptism that you have received Christ.

Q: I was baptized by immersion in a church of another denomination. Does your church accept this baptism for membership?

A: Baptism is not only a testimony of the one being baptized but is also a testimony by the authority who performs the baptism. If your church is a church of "like faith and order" we would receive the baptism they have performed. Some of the criteria that would be used to identify your church as "like faith and order" would be that they hold the same views as we do regarding Christ, the salvation He provides, the scriptures, and the ordinances of the church. Some churches baptize by immersion and teach that it is necessary for salvation. This would be an example of a proper method of baptism but with an incorrect testimony. We would ask that you be baptized testifying that salvation is found by faith in Christ alone.

Q: I was "sprinkled " when I was baptized, not "dunked ". Do I need to be baptized?

A: For membership in our church we would ask that you testify of your faith and trust in Christ through baptism as displayed in the New Testament. This, we believe, was by immersion.

Q: I was baptized in order to join a church. Now, however, I have come to understand and receive Christ as my Lord. Do I need to be baptized?

A: Proper baptism *follows* conversion. If you were baptized before you were a Christian all you did was "get wet". Baptism is not a ritual for church membership. It is the testimony of Christ as your Lord.

A Question For You

If you have come to receive Christ as Lord and have not been baptized, *why not?*

Is there any reason why you would hesitate to testify to others of the new life that Christ has given you through His death, burial and resurrection?

If you desire to be obedient is there any reason why you would hesitate to use the biblical method of testimony?

If you have further questions, please make an appointment to visit with our pastor, our staff or one of our deacons.